**St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church**

**Sunday, October 18, 2020**

***20th Sunday after Pentecost***

**Introduction to the day**

*In today’s first reading God uses the Gentile ruler Cyrus to accomplish divine purposes. When the Pharisees try to trap Jesus, he tells them to give the emperor what belongs to him and to God what belongs to God. To gather for worship reminds us that our ultimate allegiance is to God rather than to any earthly authority. Created in the image of God, we offer our entire selves in the service of God and for the sake of the world.*

**SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS**

**Prelude**

**Confession and Forgiveness**

P: In the name of the Father,

and of the ☩ Son,

and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

P: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

P: Gracious God,

**C: have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.** **Amen.**

P: In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake

God forgives us all our sins.

As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority,

I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins,

In the name of the Father, and of the +Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

**Gathering Song *God Is Here!* (ELW 526)**

(hum or sing softly with mask on)

1 God is here! As we your people meet to offer praise and prayer,  
may we find in fuller measure what it is in Christ we share.  
Here, as in the world around us, all our varied skills and arts  
wait the coming of the Spirit into open minds and hearts.  
  
2 Here are symbols to remind us of our lifelong need of grace;  
here are table, font, and pulpit; here the cross has central place.  
Here in honesty of preaching, here in silence, as in speech,  
here, in newness and renewal, God the Spirit comes to each.  
  
3 Here our children find a welcome in the Shepherd's flock and fold;  
here as bread and wine are taken, Christ sustains us as of old.  
Here the servants of the Servant seek in worship to explore  
what it means in daily living to believe and to adore.  
  
4 Lord of all, of church and kingdom, in an age of change and doubt,  
keep us faithful to the gospel; help us work your purpose out.  
Here, in this day's dedication, all we have to give, receive;  
we, who cannot live without you, we adore you! We believe!

**Greeting**

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,

and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**C: And also with you.**

**Prayer of the Day**

P: Let us pray.

**C: Sovereign God, raise your throne in our hearts. Created by you, let us live in your image; created for you, let us act for your glory; redeemed by you, let us give you what is yours, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.** **Amen.**

*The assembly is seated.*

**Word**

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

**First Reading: Isaiah 45:1-7**

L: A reading from Isaiah.

*The prophet announces that Cyrus the Persian emperor is the one the Lord has anointed to end Israel’s exile. The Lord makes this choice so that the whole world will recognize this Lord as the only God. Persia had a god of light and a god of darkness; the Lord claims sovereignty over both light and darkness.*

1Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus,  
  whose right hand I have grasped  
 to subdue nations before him  
  and strip kings of their robes,  
 to open doors before him—  
  and the gates shall not be closed:  
 2I will go before you  
  and level the mountains,  
 I will break in pieces the doors of bronze  
  and cut through the bars of iron,  
 3I will give you the treasures of darkness  
  and riches hidden in secret places,  
 so that you may know that it is I, the Lord,  
  the God of Israel, who call you by your name.  
 4For the sake of my servant Jacob,  
  and Israel my chosen,  
 I call you by your name,  
  I surname you, though you do not know me.  
 5I am the Lord, and there is no other;  
  besides me there is no god.  
  I arm you, though you do not know me,  
 6so that they may know, from the rising of the sun  
  and from the west, that there is no one besides me;  
  I am the Lord, and there is no other.  
 7I form light and create darkness,  
  I make weal and create woe;  
  I the Lord do all these things.

L: The word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm 96:1-9 [10-13] read responsively**

1Sing to the Lord a new song;  
  sing to the Lord, all the earth.  
 2**Sing to the Lord, bless the name of the Lord;**  
  **proclaim God’s salvation from day to day.**  
 3Declare God’s glory among the nations  
  and God’s wonders among all peoples.  
 4**For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised,**  
  **more to be feared than all gods.**   
 5As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols;  
  but you, O Lord, have made the heavens.  
 6**Majesty and magnificence are in your presence;**  
  **power and splendor are in your sanctuary.**  
 7Ascribe to the Lord, you families of the peoples,  
  ascribe to the Lord honor and power.  
 8**Ascribe to the Lord the honor due the holy name;**  
  **bring offerings and enter the courts of the Lord.**   
 9Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness;  
  tremble before the Lord, all the earth.  
 10**Tell it out among the nations: “The Lord is king!** **The one who made the world so firm that it cannot be moved will judge the peoples with equity.”**  
 11Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;  
  let the sea thunder and all that is in it; let the field be joyful and all that is therein.  
 12**Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy at your coming, O Lord,**  
  **for you come to judge the earth.**  
 13You will judge the world with righteousness  
  and the peoples with your truth.

**Second Reading:** **1 Thessalonians 1:1-10**

L: A reading from 1 Thessalonians.

*Most likely this letter is the first written by Paul. Paul gives pastoral encouragement and reassurances to new Christians living in an antagonistic environment. Their commitment of faith, love, and hope makes them a model for other new Christian communities.*

1Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,   
  To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:   
  Grace to you and peace.  
  2We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly 3remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. 4For we know, brothers and sisters beloved by God, that he has chosen you, 5because our message of the gospel came to you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of persons we proved to be among you for your sake. 6And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit, 7so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. 8For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith in God has become known, so that we have no need to speak about it. 9For the people of those regions report about us what kind of welcome we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God, 10and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming.

L: The word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel Acclamation**

**Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?**

**You have the words of eternal life.**

**Alleluia. Alleluia.**

**Gospel:** **Matthew 22:15-22**

P: The holy gospel according to Matthew.

**C: Glory to you, O Lord.**

*After Jesus begins teaching in the temple, religious leaders try to trap him with questions. First they ask if God’s people should pay taxes to an earthly tyrant like Caesar.*

15Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap [Jesus] in what he said. 16So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. 17Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?” 18But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, “Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? 19Show me the coin used for the tax.” And they brought him a denarius. 20Then he said to them, “Whose head is this, and whose title?” 21They answered, “The emperor’s.” Then he said to them, “Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” 22When they heard this, they were amazed; and they left him and went away.

P: The gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Sermon**

***Silence for meditation***

**Hymn of the DaY *You Servants of God* (ELW 825)**

(Hum or sing softly with mask on)

1 You servants of God, your Master proclaim,  
and publish abroad his wonderful name;  
the name, all-victorious, of Jesus extol;  
his kingdom is glorious and rules over all!  
  
2 Ascended on high, almighty to save,  
yet still he is nigh, his presence we have.  
The great congregation his triumph shall sing,  
ascribing salvation to Jesus, our king!  
  
3 Salvation to God who sits on the throne!  
Let all cry aloud and honor the Son.  
The praises of Jesus the angels proclaim,  
fall down on their faces, and worship the Lamb.  
  
4 Then let us adore and give him his right,  
all glory and pow'r and wisdom and might,  
all honor and blessing, with angels above,  
and thanks never ceasing, and infinite love!

**APOSTLES Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,**

**creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord,**

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,**

**born of the virgin Mary,**

**suffered under Pontius Pilate,**

**was crucified, died, and was buried;**

**he descended to the dead.\***

**On the third day he rose again;**

**he ascended into heaven,**

**he is seated at the right hand of the Father,**

**and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,**

**the holy catholic church,**

**the communion of saints,**

**the forgiveness of sins,**

**the resurrection of the body,**

**and the life everlasting. Amen.**

**Prayers of Intercession**

A: With confidence in God’s grace and mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A: Gracious God, you call us by name and invite us to share your good news. Send your Holy Spirit among preachers, missionaries, and evangelists. We give thanks for the witness of your servant Luke, the evangelist, whom the church commemorates today. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

A: God of praise, the heavens and all creation declare your salvation. From the rising of the sun to its setting, may the whole universe show forth your goodness. Raise up devoted stewards of all that you have made. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

A: God of all, may your word of justice sound forth in every place. Restore divided nations and communities with reconciling truth. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

A: God of light, we pray for those living with pain, illness, isolation, grief, anger, or doubt (especially). Join their voices in a new song, assuring them that you call them each by name. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

A: God of truth, you show no partiality. May your spirit guide the work of justices, magistrates, court officials, and all vocations of the law, that your promise of restoration may be known. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

A: Living God, as you raised Jesus from the dead, so raise up those who have died in you. We give thanks for their witness, confident of your rescuing welcome for all. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

P: Listen as we call on you, O God, and enfold in your loving arms all for whom we pray, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

**Meal**

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

**Offering Prayer**

A: Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things.

You have set before us these gifts of your good creation.

Prepare us for your heavenly banquet, nourish us with this rich food and drink,

and send us forth to set tables in the midst of a suffering world,

through the bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

**Great Thanksgiving**

**Dialogue**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

**Preface by Pastor**

**Holy, Holy, Holy**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,** **God of pow’r and might,**

**heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna. Hosanna. Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Thanksgiving at the Table**

Holy God, our Bread of life, our Table, and our Food,

you created a world in which all might be satisfied by your abundance.

You dined with Abraham and Sarah, promising them life,

and fed your people Israel with manna from heaven.

You sent your Son to eat with sinners and to become food for the world.

In the night in which he was betrayed,

our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;

broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:

Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,

and gave it for all to drink, saying:

This cup is the new covenant in my blood,

shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore,

his life given for us and his rising from the grave,

we await his coming again to share with us the everlasting feast.

By your Spirit nurture and sustain us with this meal:

strengthen us to serve all in hunger and want,

and by this bread and cup make of us the body of your Son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours,

Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,

in your holy Church, both now and forever.

**Amen.**

**Lord’s Prayer**

**Our Father, who art in heaven,**

**hallowed be thy name,**

**thy kingdom come,**

**thy will be done,**

**on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;**

**and forgive us our trespasses,**

**as we forgive those**

**who trespass against us;**

**and lead us not into temptation,**

**but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,**

**and the power, and the glory,**

**forever and ever. Amen.**

**Invitation to Communion**

P: Come to the banquet table

where Christ gives himself as food and drink.

**The Sacrament of Holy Communion**

*Please come forward to receive the “body of Christ” by holding out your hands in a cup like fashion as far as you can. The Pastor will drop the wafer into your hand, saying “the body of Christ given for you,” and you respond “Amen,” then go to the left or right and receive the “blood of Christ” from a pre-filled glass. The glasses will be separated so you don’t touch one another. Take the glass and the communion assistant standing in the choir loft will say, “the blood of Christ shed for you.” There will be a separate tray of glasses with grape juice for those who prefer grape juice.*

**Communion**

*When giving the bread and cup, the communion ministers say*

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

*and each person may respond*

Amen.

**Communion Song**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;** **have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;** **have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;** **grant us peace.**

**Song after Communion*Jesus, Remember Me***

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.  
Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

**Prayer after Communion**

A: We give you thanks, gracious God, that you have once again fed us with food beyond compare,the body and blood of Christ. Lead us from this place, nourished and forgiven, into your beloved vineyard to wipe away the tears of all who hunger and thirst, guided by the example of the same Jesus Christ and led by the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

**Sending**

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

**Blessing**

**Dismissal**

**Postlude**

***Please leave your offering in the offertory plate located at each exit of the church.***

***Announcements***

Remember in prayer: Rowen Aldridge, Luke Antolick, Bob Braucht, Dawn Hauser, Ralph Lehman, Caleb Leone, David Mitchell, Bob and Phyllis Moriarity, Kathy Neal, Rev. Donald and Ruth Nice, Cora Pellitier, Jack Rishel, Joann Rishel, Jane Shaffer, Jillian Waldman, and all of our shut-ins; the safety of our military troops around the world (Mark Baier, Jade Cordrey, Paul Laidacker, Kenny Leitch, Maddison Myers, Tyler O’Neal, Adam Shaffer, Aaron Stabley, Paul St. James, Jenna White); Everyone affected by the fires on the West Coast; Family Promise and the homeless in our counties. Bishop Eaton, our Presiding Bishop; and Bishop Collins, Bishop of the Upper Susquehanna Synod. For our Companion Synod in Liberia and Ansbach-Wurzburg, Germany; our sister church, St. Wunibald in Heidenheim, Germany and for the New Love Center as it seeks to build a new food hub.

The flowers are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of my parents Harris and Winifred Barner given by Cynthia Breon.

Special Thanks to this week’s helpers: Lectors – Shane Snyder; Assisting Ministers - Gary Johnson and Cozette Stoltzfus; Acolyte –; Communion Assistants-; Head Usher -Gina Johnson; Tellers- Jim Ely; Bulletin sponsor -;

Next week’s helpers: Lectors –Deb Heydrich; Assisting Ministers -Joyce Braucht and Carl Schaefer; Acolyte –; Communion Assistants -; Head Usher -Gina Johnson; Tellers- Jim Ely; Bulletin sponsor -;

Thank you to the Congregation for the birthday cards Bob and I received for our birthdays.

Phyllis Moriarity

The Lutheran Church **Women’s Prayer Chain** is a vital ministry of St. John Lutheran.

Anyone in need of prayers is asked to contact any of the following persons:

Gloria Ely – 570-873-3597

Sarah Davidson - 570-398-0659

Joyce Braucht - 570-398-2852

**Bible Study to Resume October 19** -While everything is still in a state of flux regarding the safety of members to gather in groups, we are hopeful that we can resume Bible study on October 19 with a luncheon following Bible study at the home of Gloria and Dean Ely, 1212 Creekside Lane. Bible Study will be held at 10:00 a.m. every Monday in the large Sunday School room. We will study the book of Esther. Please read ahead on Esther.

**Chancel Choir is FUN!**  -Yes, you need to go to rehearsal, but we are a great group.  Choir invites you to join us—make a joyful noise unto the Lord and have great fellowship!  Choir will practice Wednesday, October 21 and 28 at 6:30 p.m. and sing an anthem beginning on Sunday, November 1.  Choir members will be asked / required to wear a mask or shield at all times, and we will work on socially distancing at rehearsal and in the nave. We’d love for you to join us!

**Carpenter’s Farm -**A favorite Fall tradition is approaching as we invite all of our youth to Carpenter’s Farm in Linden on Saturday, October 24 at 2:00 p.m. We will be going for a hayride, walking through the corn maze, and all participants will be allowed to take home one pumpkin. If you are interested in this event, please text Molly at 570-814-3489.

**Giving Plus+ -** Download the “Giving Plus+” app from your app store for your cell phone. This feature is also available on our web site. Enter your email, make up a password, and walk through the choices to give the church an electronic donation by check or debit/credit card. People were asking if they could give electronically by debit/credit card. Now this feature is available. If you have any questions, contact Pastor Aucker.

**Give+ Text:** Simply send a text message to 570-865-1101 with the amount you would like to contribute. Within a few minutes, you’ll be sent a text with a link to register. Click on the link and enter your cardholder name and credit or debit card information. Once your registration is complete, you will receive a text verification and a receipt of your donation via email.

McElhattan United Methodist church is having their free Thanksgiving dinner on Saturday, November 21, 11 am until they are out of food. They will need donations of chocolate chip cookies.

**Apple Dumplings Update -** The Women of St. John have made the difficult decision to not gather together in the kitchen to make the homemade apple dumplings at this time because of COVID. We do hope that next year, we can resume our annual tradition.

**Appreciation Dinner Update**

The women of St. John have decided to postpone the Annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner until after the first of the year. We will update you with more information when available.

Woolrich and McElhattan United Methodist Churches are conducting their annual Christmas stocking stuffer for area families. They are asking for donations of small items for a stocking: slinky’s, match box cars, hair ties, stickers, crayons, toothbrushes, anything small that one would fit in a stocking by November 8. Either leave at St. John or Woolrich United Methodist Church. They will have a drive-by distribution before Christmas.

**Christmas-at-Sea**

Would you like to bring joy to seafarers who will not be home with their families for Christmas? Our port chaplains deliver satchels filled with gifts to the seafarers they meet in port in the weeks prior to Christmas. Later, on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, when the ship is in the middle of the ocean, the captain will hold a celebration, and all the crew will open their satchels, each containing:

One sweatshirt – hooded or unhooded (size L-XL)

Three pairs of socks – thermal or white gym

One casual pullover T-shirt (size M-L)

Knit hat or scarf

One can of nuts or bar of chocolate, and

A Christmas card from you.

We invite you to participate in a memory of Pastor Martha McCracken by purchasing the items needed for a Christmas Seafarer’s bag. Bags are available in the office. Please return by Nov. 1. for many years Pastor McCracken was President of Seafarers Ministry.

***THIS WEEK’S EVENTS***

Sunday, October 18, 2020 *20th Sunday after Pentecost*

9:00 a.m. Nave Worship Service

7:00 p.m. AA meeting

Monday, October 19, 2020

10:00 p.m. Bible Study at Ely’s

6:00 p.m. Christian Education Meeting

7:00 pm Youth Ministry Meeting

6:30 p.m. Boy Scouts

Tuesday, October 20, 2020

7:30 p.m. A.A. and N. A. meetings

Wednesday, October 21, 2020

10:00 a.m. Prayer/Communion at Trinity Episcopal

6:30 p.m. Choir

Friday, October 23, 2020

9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Food Distribution

Saturday, October 24, 2020

2:00 p.m. Fall Family Day Carpenter’s Farm

Sunday, October 25, 2020 21st *Sunday after Pentecost*

9:00 a.m. Nave Worship Service

7:00 p.m. AA meeting